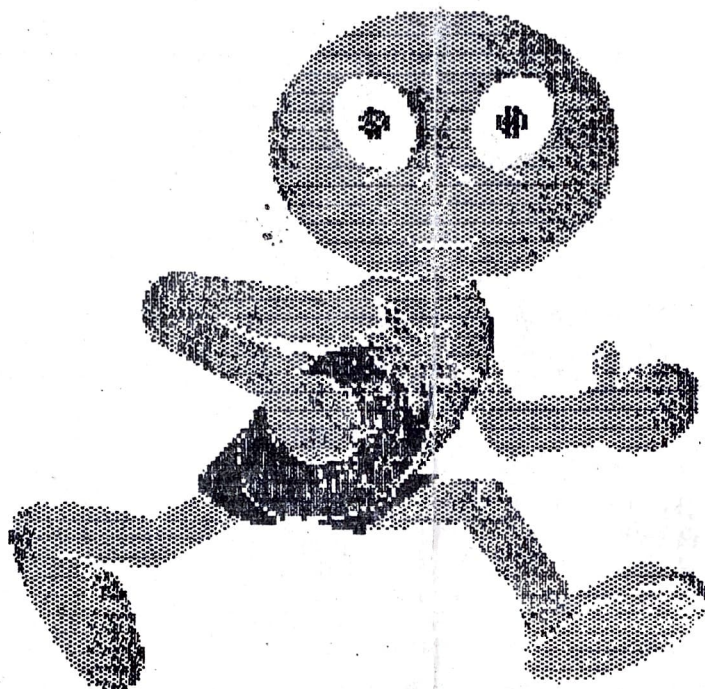


ABUG



ABUG #54

DECEMBER 1987

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DIARY

The next few meetings will be held on:

6 January 1988
20 January
3 February
17 February

All meetings are held at the Sheffield Trades and Labour Club, Duke Street.

CHAIRPERSON'S LETTER

Some of the members may recall an article some time ago (ABUG Newsletter #27) on the grounds of "Buyer Beware" written by myself following my disastrous purchase of a set of joy sticks during a visit to the Manchester User Show.

Many is the time when attending a Club meeting have I heard the comment "It always seems to happen to me". Well it may be of interest to those members that it always happens to me also and I would suspect to everyone else if the truth would be known. If a census was taken I am sure that we have all encountered problems when dealing with suppliers of goods and services.

I recently became aware of a problem when using my BBC computer. The *BACKUP command would not operate when attempting to back up from drive 0 to Drive 1, although a backup from Drive 0 to Drive 2 appeared to work correctly, as did *COPY.

Being fundamentally of an idle disposition together with being, if not terrified, certainly rather nervous in approaching any Company that would undertake the repair, I suffered the inconvenience of this fault until forced finally to take some action.

Past experience in similar situations gave me a feeling of foreboding and together with the fact that I might be compelled to send an enormous parcel to some remote corner of England (or even back to the Taiwan manufacturers) did nothing to allay my fears. With these trepidations in mind and ignoring my better thoughts which were to use a large recognised company, I decided to risk using a local computer maintenance repair shop. The choice of local supplier being chosen by the fact that on my twice monthly journey into Sheffield I have to pass one such shop.

Having chosen the supplier and using the need to have this repair undertaken as a matter of some urgency to get out of decorating a bedroom, much to my wife's annoyance for I was on holiday at the time, I loaded up the car with the Beeb, the 80 track twin full height disc drives and a rather large power supply and presented myself at the shop door.

IMPENDING DISASTER !!!

"Obtain a quotation for the repair" was my first thought on entering the shop.

No problems. In fact I was asked by the assistant if I would prefer to be given an estimate. Having agreed to this I was pleasantly surprised when on the following day a quotation was 'phoned through to me at home.

POINT 1. Obtain a quotation or if this is not possible then state a price which must be exceeded without a written confirmation.

I gave the go-ahead for the repair to be done and once again, with admirable speed, on the following day I received another 'phone call informing me that the repair was complete. With similar haste I collected my bits and pieces, paid the bill, arrived home, set up the rig only to find that the original fault was still there.

POINT 2. However embarrassed you are, please ask for a demonstration that what was asked for has been done.

Returning, with equal haste, back to the shop I was invited to demonstrate to the assistant that the original fault remained. To the credit of the Company, who acted throughout with courtesy and tolerance, they very helpfully explained fully the repair they had done and having found on fault (it is here that some of the problem was self inflicted by my insisting that the fault was on the disc drives) they had proceeded no further. They had assumed that as they have their own test rig for disc drives and that the test showed the fault on the drives had been cured, they looked no further.

POINT 3. Leave the repair to the professionals

I accepted fully, by demonstration, that the disc drives were O.K., the problem was obviously with the BBC machine.

To cut a long story (saga?) short the Company turned out to be BBC agents and so, foolishly as I thought at the time, I agreed to them undertaking the repair of the BBC computer.

The fault took a little longer to find and subsequently repair but within a couple of days I collected the rig during my lunch break and had the rig working without fault that same evening.

The nagging pains of withdrawal symptoms and the fear of something else being wrong, finally disappeared.

POINT 4. Not all Companies are staffed by rogues.

Finally, I must admit that had I been more explicit and less dogmatic about what the repair was I consider that I would have had considerably less bother. With regard to the Company I was

dealt with extremely well. The repair was speedy and satisfactory and of reasonable cost. I would not hesitate to use this local repair shop again and would recommend their services to other members of the Club.

The address of the shop is as follows:-

SPOT
Computer Maintenance Ltd
589 Chesterfield Road
Woodseats
Sheffield S8 0RX

Telephone (0742) 589810

Chairman
F.K.Webster

... 1988 SUBSCRIPTIONS

Yes, I'm afraid subscription time is nearly with us again. However, the good news is that, thanks to the financial wizardry of your committee (not to mention the relatively low cost of the room at the Trades and Labour Club), we are able to maintain the 1988 subscription at the 1987 rate! So even if you've lost your money in BT shares, you should still be able to belong to Abug.

Following our usual practice, there is a discount for early payment, and the rates if you pay in one of our January meetings are as follows:

Adult Membership	£10
Junior (under 16)	£3
Family Membership	£12

However, if you wait until after 31 January, the following rates will apply:

Adult Membership	£12
Junior (under 16)	£4
Family Membership	£14

So, as you can see, if you pay your subscription before 31 January, you can make a significant saving.

Alternatively, you can pay 60p (30p if you are under 16) per meeting attended.

The rates for new members joining after the beginning of the year are (more or less) pro rata for the remaining time.

CONSTRUCTION KITS

Mike Cattell, our esteemed Secretary, has been supplying logic analyser kits for some years now. If you're interested, have a word with him at the next meeting.

WHAT'S IN THE MAGS?

DISK USER, Dec/Jan 1987/88, #4, 36pp + 40 track 5.25 inch disc, £2.95

On Paper:

News / Discs & the 512 / Book reviews / Games reviews / ADFS features

On Disc:

Floating point 3D graphics / Music tutor / Blockade maze chase game (not Master) / Screen compactor / Repton 3 screen printer / Mode 7 animation / Teach-in on random access files / BASIC number resequencer / New repton 3 screens / Disc repairer

A & B COMPUTING, January 1988, Vol 5, #1, 116pp, £1.50

Features:

Chess programs / Online services & information / Humanities educational software / Trackerball for the Archimedes / Model B to Arc communications / Desk top publishing (DTP) / Pascal programming

Programs:

Beeb-link comms program

Software Reviews:

Arcade games / Publishing packages / iMAGiN.L (DTP) (Master) / Deltabase (Arc) / Typesetter! & Fleet Street Phantom (DTP)

Hardware Reviews:

Rom & ram cartridges for the Master / Cambridge Z88 Portable Computer / Epson GQ3500 laser printer

THE MICRO USER, January 1988, Vol 5, #11, 180pp, £1.25

Features:

Adventure games / Adventure programming / Arcade game secrets, incl Contraption, Stryker's Run, Galaforce, Dunjunz / Ceefax guide for December / Body Building Course - Eight Pins game / Buying a modem / Writing commercial software / Index for 1987

Programs:

RAM Wars game / Cut and paste graphics / Convert metric to imperial / Number Invaders, educational arithmetic game / Cocktail mixing / Barney Bee children's game / Avengence game / Tape back-up utility / File transfer from Z88 to Beeb / Graphics menu

Software Reviews:

Arcade games / Sigma & Harm mathematical packages / Advanced Basic / Music Theory Hints and Tests / Sand harvest / Midi packages / Adventure Language Programming System / Artisan (Arc)

Hardware Reviews:

MicroStuffer printer buffer

ACORN USER, January 1988, #66, 194pp, £1.30

Features:

Random file access / Remote control / Getting the most out of your graphics package / Educational design software / network testing

Programs:

Printing labels from Wordwise Plus / Flying Wizards game / File transfer from the Z88 / Binary constants in BASIC

Software Reviews:

Games / Archimedes Toolkit Module / Books / Squeak viewdata terminal package / TED teletext editor / Microbrush art package

Hardware Reviews:

Master add-on cartridges

Dave Brown

COVER

This month's cover was drawn by Chris Bramwell. If anyone would like to have a go at designing and/or drawing a cover, please let me know.